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Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Alabama Announces New Center to Help Fight Terrorism, Crime *DHS's Admiral Rufe Delivers Keynote for Alabama Fusion Center*

MONTGOMERY — Local, state and federal officials welcomed a new asset in Alabama's efforts to combat terrorism and crime, with the opening of the Alabama Fusion Center Dec. 1. Vice Admiral (ret.) Roger T. Rufe Jr. of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) delivered the keynote address and commended the center's work "to detect, prevent and respond to terrorism and crime."

Rufe, director of DHS's Office of Operations, Coordination and Planning, said, "DHS sees fusion centers such as this as the critical bridge for sharing information vertically between the federal government and our state, local and tribal partners, as well as horizontally across the states.

"DHS has critical responsibilities for leading the federal effort to work with states and major urban areas to establish fusion centers across the country and design policies and programs to integrate them into a national network. We support fusion centers by deploying our intelligence officers to the centers, providing grant funding for their development and operation, connecting networks and systems, and strengthening the relevant communities of interest."

The Fusion Center is a collaborative operation that receives and disseminates data aimed at combating terrorism and crime, according to Col. J. Christopher Murphy, director of the Alabama Department of Public Safety. DPS houses the center, provides the officer in charge, and serves as co-chair of its steering committee, along with the Alabama Department of Homeland Security.

"We know that information-sharing is critical in fighting terrorism and other criminal activities that victimize the public and undermine our safety and security," Murphy said. "Through the Alabama Fusion Center, we have established a means to capture, analyze and disseminate data that furthers the work of protecting our state," he said.

In establishing the center, Alabama joins other states in a unified initiative of the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and Justice to ensure that law enforcement and criminal justice agencies have timely access to meaningful information. Support for the center is provided by Homeland Security grant funding.

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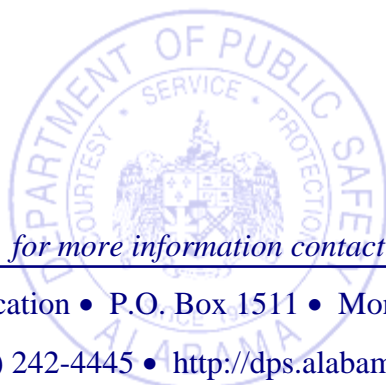
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Murphy said the AFC has adopted an “all crimes” approach. “We recognize that there are commonalities among criminal elements and terrorism. That is why we focus on data that is particularly relevant to the day-to-day work of law enforcement officers in fighting crime, in addition to terrorism-related information and intelligence,” he said.

Murphy said Public Safety has merged ABI’s Criminal Intelligence Center into the AFC to consolidate information-sharing functions. FBI and Alabama National Guard personnel also staff the center pursuant to memoranda of understanding.

In addition to Public Safety and the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, steering committee members for the center are the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; U.S. Attorney’s Office, Northern District; U.S. Attorney’s Office, Middle District; U.S. Attorney’s Office, Southern District; FBI, Birmingham; FBI, Mobile; the Adjutant General; the Attorney General; Department of Agriculture and Industries; Department of Public Health; Alabama Emergency Management Agency; Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center; Alabama Sheriffs’ Association; and Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police.

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